

West Chester, Pa – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) met with members of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater West Chester this afternoon to discuss his most recent work in Washington and at home in light of the economic crisis, the worst the country has faced since the Great Depression. With 760 small businesses lost in the Seventh District alone even before this latest crisis, from 2001-2006, the Congressman took the opportunity to address the concerns of local small business and industry leaders and to offer his vision of rebuilding the nation's economy.

The Chamber of Commerce of Greater West Chester is an organization comprised of small and big businesses which works for the "betterment and prosperity of the business community." Members include the leaders of banks, investment firms, schools, restaurants and other local business owners. The Congressman, who fielded questions from Chamber members at the Penn Oaks Golf Club, stressed the need to develop the Seventh District's small business community, noting that every dollar spent on entrepreneurial development programs results in a \$2.87 return to the Treasury.

"I firmly believe that encouraging entrepreneurship is necessary to jump-start our national and local economies. Small businesses create more than 70 percent of all jobs and preserving the unique entrepreneurial spirit of Americans is one of my primary goals," said the Congressman. "As Vice-Chairman of the Small Business Committee, many of the objectives of the West Chester Chamber of Commerce are aligned with my own, specifically in the area of workforce development, and I appreciated their thoughtful questioning and insights"

As part of his efforts to prepare students for success in the workforce, the Congressman has started an initiative to partner schools directly with business and industry leaders, providing students and parents an experience-based curriculum that begins in middle school and helps them learn about opportunities that exist specifically in high-value manufacturing fields. The program emphasizes the need for a high degree of proficiency in sciences and math and is a result of discussions at the Congressman's Workforce Development Summit, in his Higher Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee, and at his Education Summit.

To help small businesses to stay afloat despite the difficult economic climate, the Congressman recently helped pass the Job Creation through Entrepreneurship Act of 2009. The bill calls for the overhaul of the Small Business Administration's entrepreneurial development programs—such as Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs), and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). Congressman Sestak was an original cosponsor of the bill.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

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